

Possible P3 Project – Proposed Interstate Corridor

The States of Arizona and Nevada have been working together to plan future transportation solutions to address an identified deficiency in the north-south transportation connectivity within the intermountain west. According to the 2010 census briefs, Nevada was the fastest-growing state between 2000 and 2010, and was followed by Arizona, with the highest growth occurring in the Phoenix and Las Vegas metropolitan areas. Phoenix and Las Vegas are the only two major metropolitan areas in the United States with populations in excess of one million that do not have a direct Interstate highway connection. The Proposed Interstate Corridor is envisioned as a new high-capacity multimodal transportation corridor connecting the metropolitan areas of Phoenix and Las Vegas, and potentially extending south to Mexico and north to Canada through Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington – possibly the new CANAMEX corridor. The proposed corridor also offers an alternate route around the metropolitan Phoenix area, significantly reducing pollution and congestion from vehicles that are able to avoid the more congested metropolitan area.

The concept of this route was first conceived in the I-10/Hassayampa Valley and the I-8 and I-10/Hidden Valley Transportation Framework Studies managed by the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG). Planned as an alternative route around the Phoenix metropolitan area in these framework studies, it was tentatively named the “Hassayampa Freeway”. The Hassayampa Freeway developed into the Proposed Interstate Corridor in ADOT’s bqAZ Statewide Transportation Planning Framework Program, which extended the corridor beyond the MAG framework study boundaries to the Nevada state line, generally utilizing the US 93 corridor north from Wickenburg, Arizona.

The Proposed Interstate Corridor can be developed in a relatively cost effective manner. By upgrading an existing corridor to Interstate standards, tremendous cost savings are introduced when compared to the development of an entirely new interstate transportation facility. A large portion of this corridor is part of an existing transportation facility, US 93, from Wickenburg to Las Vegas. ADOT has been investing in improvements to upgrade US 93 to a four-lane divided highway, expanding the corridor between Wickenburg and the new Mike O’Callaghan – Pat Tillman Memorial Bridge (which is the central portion of the Hoover Dam Bypass Project). Several ideas have been conceptualized for a southern route extension to Mexico, including using the existing I-10 and I-19 corridors.

As an additional example of cost effective solutions, the State of Arizona has been working with several large landowners on the stretch between I-10 and Wickenburg, who have expressed a willingness to dedicate millions of dollars in rights-of-way for a large portion of the corridor, introducing even further cost savings and potential private sector investment. ADOT is considering tolling of this and other ‘new alignment’ segments as a potential funding or finance mechanism to advance individual project segments.

The Proposed Interstate Corridor will introduce greater regional connectivity and present increased economic development opportunities in Arizona. High-speed passenger rail and freight rail, and long-distance infrastructure such as energy and telecommunications are envisioned as a part of this new corridor.